

Message Text

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11
ACTION SS-15

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O P 280506Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1734
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 WELLINGTON 2809

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (ROBINSON, CHRLES W.), ANZUS
SUBJECT: WELLINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: (A) STATE 180623, (B) STATE 183423

1. INQUIRIES FROM NEW ZEALAND PRESS INDICATE THAT MEDIA INTEREST IN DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBINSON'S VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND CENTERS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY AROUND THE ISSUE OF NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIPS VISITING NEW ZEALAND PORTS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE PORT CALLS TO THE ANZUS DEFENSE. AMBASSADOR SELDEN WILL BRIEF YOU ON THIS MATTER IN AUCKLAND AND WILL HAVE WITH HIM SEVERAL OTHER SHORT BRIEFING PAPERS.

2. OPENING STATEMENT:

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE IN NEW ZEALAND AGAIN. I HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW OLD "KIWI ACQUAINTANCES, RELAX A BIT IN THE BEAUTY OF YOUR COUNTRY AND, OF COURSE, TO ENGAGE YOUR PRIME MINISTER AND MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET IN A FULL DISCUSSION OF OUR BILATERAL AND ANZUS RELATIONS.

WE HAVE HAD THOSE TALKS TODAY, AND I WILL BE CONTINUING MY DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS WHEN THE ANZUS PARTNERS MEET IN CANBERRA.

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I JUST WANT TO SAY BEFORE I TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS
THAT THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES
DOES NOT REFLECT THE CLOSENESS AND WARMTH OF OUR TIES. I ARRIVED
IN AUCKLAND SATURDAY FEELING AS
THOUGH I WERE VISITING AN OLD FRIEND. I'LL BE LEAVING
LATER THIS EVENING HAVING EXPERIENCED ONCE AGAIN THE
GENUINE, WARM HOSPITALITY OF THE NEW ZEALAND PEOPLE.
WE SHARE SIMILAR VALUES AND, I BELIEVE, WE HAVE A
COMMON OUTLOOK TOWARD THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING
PEACE AND FREEDOM IN THE PACIFIC AREA. OUR TALKS HAVE
BEEN WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK AND I FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN
VERY HELPFUL.

NOW, WITH THAT, I'LL ENTERTAIN YOUR QUESTIONS.

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q. WOULD A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE OR THE BANNING OF NUCLEAR-
POWERED WARSHIPS FROM NEW ZEALAND PORTS AFFECT THE
OPERATION OF THE ANZUS ALLIANCE?

A. YES, IT WOULD.

YOUR PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSED THIS QUESTION
SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHEN HE MADE HIS POLICY STATEMENT
ON THE VISIT OF NPW'S. HE, IN EFFECT, POINTED
OUT THAT ANZUS IS A TWO-WAY STREET.

UNDER THE TERMS OF THE ANZUS AGREEMENT, WE
HAVE AGREED TO COME TO THE AID OF THE OTHER PARTNER STATES IN THE
EVENT OF AN ARMED ATTACK IN THE PACIFIC AREA. YET,
MY COUNTRY CANNOT EFFECTIVELY FULFILL ITS OBLIGATION
UNDER THE ANZUS TREATY, EITHER TO NEW ZEALAND OR
AUSTRALIA, IF THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO BE
RESTRICTED BY ITS ALLIES IN THE USE OF ITS NAVY
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA.

AS YOU KNOW, A LARGE AND GROWING PROPORTION OF
THE UNITED STATES NAVY IS NUCLEAR POWERED. THIS
MAKES IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE
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JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES WITH OUR ANZUS ALLIES UNLESS
NUCLEAR-POWERED VESSELS ARE INCLUDED IN TOSE
EXERCISES AND PORT FACILITIES FOR THEM ARE MADE
AVAILABLE FROM TIME TO TIME.

WE HAVE HAD TO OPERATE UNDER THOSE CRIPPLING
RESTRICTIONS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BECAUSE THE
GOVERNMENTS OF NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA ASKED THAT

WE DISCONTINUE NPW PORT VISITS UNTIL THE QUESTION OF LIABILITY WAS RESOLVED. IN AN EFFORT TO COMPLY WITH WHAT WE BELIEVED TO BE A REASONABLE REQUEST OF YOUR GOVERNMENT, WE TEMPORARILY DISCONTINUED NPW VISITS AND CONGRESS ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO PASSED LEGISLATION ACCEPTING ABSOLUTE LIABILITY IN THE EVENT OF A REACTOR INCIDENT. TO CONTINUE NOW TO BAN NPW VISITS OF AN ANZUS ALLY WOULD, IN MY GOVERNMENT'S OPINION, BE CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ANZUS AGREEMENT. I AM VERY PLEASED YOUR GOVERNMENT IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THIS POSITION.

Q. DOES THE USG WANT TO STOCKPILE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN NEW ZEALAND OR BUILD A BASE IN NEW ZEALAND?

A. NO, NOT AT ALL. THAT IS NOT PART OF OUR SECURITY STRATEGY.

Q. THE NEW ZEALAND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS SMALL AND OUTDATED: HOW SHOULD IT UPGRADE ITS FORCES TO MEET ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER THE TREATY? IS NEW ZEALAND "PULLING HER WEIGHT" WITHIN ANZUS?

A. THAT IS A QUESTION WHICH I CAN'T ANSWER. IT IS ONE FOR YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE.

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ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
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INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

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LET ME JUST SAY GENERALLY, HOWEVER, THAT
THE U.S. FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE CONSTRAINTS PLACED

ON YOUR DEFENSE SPENDING, BOTH IN TERMS OF YOUR SIZE AND, MOST RECENTLY, BY YOUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. MY DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT LEADERS INDICATE THAT NEW ZEALAND VERY MUCH WANTS TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN ALL PHASES OF ANZUS. I AM CONFIDENT NEW ZEALAND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION IN TERMS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT, OCEAN SURVEILLANCE, TRAINING EXERCISES, AS WELL AS ACTUAL MILITARY MEN AND HARDWARE.

Q. WHAT DOES NEW ZEALAND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ANZUS TREATY AND WHAT DOES THE UNITED STATES GET OUT OF IT?

A. OUR PRESIDENT HAS STATED -- AND I CERTAINLY AGREE -- THAT NO NATION SHOULD CONDUCT ITS DEFENSE POLICY UNDER THE BELIEF THAT IT IS DOING THE UNITED STATES A FAVOR BY PERMITTING US TO CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEFENSE. I AM CONFIDENT THIS IS NOT THE CASE IN NEW ZEALAND AND HAS NEVER BEEN THE CASE WITHIN THE ANZUS PARTNERSHIP.

THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND I THINK OF NEW ZEALAND, IS CLOSELY TIED TO THE FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF THE PACIFIC REGION. THROUGH PERIODIC JOINT EXERCISES, POLITICAL SUPPORT IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, THE STABILIZING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFLUENCE OF YOUR FORCES IN THE REGION, AND THE CONTINUED EXCHANGE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL AND INTELLIGENCE, EACH ANZUS PARTNER MAKES A FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRENGTH OF THE ALLIANCE.

Q. WHAT IS THE THREAT TO NEW ZEALAND? IS THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE U.S. AND U.S.S.R. OF VITAL INTEREST TO NEW ZEALAND?

A. THE SOVIET UNION IS ENDEAVORING TO EXERT INCREASING INFLUENCE WORLDWIDE -- IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, AFRICA, THE INDIAN OCEAN. TO SAY THAT NEW ZEALAND IS NOT VITALLY INTERESTED IN THIS WOULD BE TO SAY THAT IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND WHETHER OR NOT THE UNITED STATES OR THE SOVIET UNION IS THE DOMINANT PACIFIC POWER. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT DOES MATTER TO YOUR GOVERNMENT AND YOUR PEOPLE. BY VIRTUE OF OUR COMMON HERITAGE, HISTORICAL VALUES AND THE SIMILARITY OF OUR GOALS FOR THE REGION, I THINK NEW ZEALAND DOES HAVE A CLEAR PREFERENCE.

Q. IF RUSSIA DOES ESTABLISH A BASE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, WOULD THE USG WANT TO ESTABLISH A BASE TO COUNTER THIS?

A. THE UNITED STATES FEELS THAT ITS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC ARE WHOLLY ADEQUATE. WHILE THE SOVIET NAVY HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY IN BOTH SIZE AND STRENGTH IN RECENT YEARS, WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT THE SOVIET UNION INTENDS AT THIS TIME TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY BASE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC. WE WILL, HOWEVER, BE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA WITH GREAT CARE.

Q. WHAT NEW DIRECTIONS SHOULD ANZUS BE TAKING, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF RUSSIAN OVERTURES TO SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS?

A. WE, OF COURSE, WANT ANZUS TO REMAIN TIMELY -- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT BECOME OUT OF DATE -- BUT OUR FOCUS MUST REMAIN ON ANZUS'S PRIMARY PURPOSE, WHICH IS DEFENSE. FOR 24 YEARS ANZUS HAS BEEN THE CORNERSTONE OF YOURS AND OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY POLICIES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

WE ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES VIS-A-VIS THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS AND OTHER MATTERS HERE, AND SHALL DO SO IN CANBERRA, WITHIN THE ANZUS CONTEXT.

Q. THE RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS GROWING; WHAT PROBLEMS DOES THIS POSE FOR ANZUS AND FOR NEW ZEALAND IN PARTICULAR?

A. THE INCREASED RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REFLECTS THE INCREASED STRENGTH OF THE SOVIET NAVY WORLDWIDE. VITAL TRADE LINKS -- ESPECIALLY IN OIL WHICH IS SHIPPED FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND -- CRISSCROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN. I BELIEVE THE ANZUS PARTNERS ARE JUSTIFIABLY CONCERNED THAT OUR DEFENCES REMAIN STRONG AND THAT OUR TRADE ROUTES NOT BECOME VULNERABLE.

Q. IS THE U.S. PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE INCREASED SOVIET PRESENCE?

A. THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT TRIED TO MATCH THE SOVIETS SHIP-FOR-SHIP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. WE

ARE THERE, HOWEVER, TO REASSURE FRIENDS IN THE LITTORAL
COUNTRIES AND TO PREVENT THE INCREASED SOVIET PRESENCE
FROM BECOMING A DESTABILIZING INFLUENCE IN THE REGION.
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